

ALDBOUROUGH AND THURGARTON PARISH COUNCIL Co-OPTION POLICY

Adopted:

Reviewed: January 2025

Amended: September 2026

Next Review: July 2027

This Co-Option Policy is the procedure to follow when a casual vacancy occurs at Aldborough Parish Council.

1. The Parish Council must give public notice of the casual vacancy as soon as practicable after it is deemed to have occurred (in accordance with s232 of the 1972 Local Government Act). The Parish Clerk will inform Election Services at North Norfolk District Council who will supply the necessary notice. These notices will be placed on the Parish Council website, noticeboards and Social Media accounts.
2. A notice of casual vacancy allows for 10 people on the electoral register to request, in writing to the proper officer of the principal authority, that an election be held. Should this happen, a by-election must be held (unless an ordinary election is due within the next six months).
3. If no request to hold a by-election is forthcoming, Parish councils are permitted to exercise the power to co-opt a person on to the council to fill a casual vacancy. Although seeking 'expressions of interest' is not a legal requirement, it is recommended that Councils always give public notice of vacancies because this makes the process of co-option open and transparent and should attract more potential candidates.
4. Whenever the need for co-option arises, the Parish Council will advertise the vacancy to seek and encourage 'expressions of interest' by a specified date from anyone in the parish who is eligible to stand as a Parish councillor. All potential candidates will be requested to put their request for consideration in writing with the following additional information: -
 - a) Reason for wishing to be Councillor
 - b) Relevant Community/Council work
 - c) Other skills they can bring to the Council.
5. At the next suitable Full Council meeting:
 - a) **The clerk to confirm that each candidate is qualified to become a Councillor and is not disqualified from being a Councillor as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 s79 and s80. Due diligence should be carried out to ensure that the information given by the applicant is correct.**
 - b) **The candidate must be in attendance at the meeting.**
 - c) **Chairman to invite candidates an opportunity to speak and to allow members the chance to ask questions of the candidates.**
 - d) **The chairman will be able to adjourn the meeting for private consultation if this is required. This could be to determine the suitability of the candidates.**

- e) The meeting will vote on the acceptability of each candidate for co-option. If there are more applicants than vacancies there should be a signed ballot. An absolute majority vote is required for each candidate from all members present and entitled to vote (LGA 1972 Sch. 12. Para 39). One person will be chosen for each vacancy.**
6. Once chosen the co-opted members may join the meeting.
 7. The Clerk will notify Electoral Services of the new councillor appointment, initiate 'Acceptance of Office' paperwork and advise the co-opted member of her/his obligations with regard to registration of interests.
 8. If no one accepts the vacant post(s), the whole process is to be repeated when new individuals expressing interest are identified or until the next election.
 9. The same process will be filled to co-opt members following an ordinary election after which vacancies remained.
 10. This policy will be reviewed every two years or as legislation changes.

The attached form will be used as the basis of ascertaining a candidate's suitability to put his or herself forward for co-option.

APPLICATION FOR THE ROLE OF COUNCILLOR ON ALDBOROUGH AND THURGARTON PARISH COUNCIL

Full name	
Home address	
Inc. Postcode	
Telephone number	
Mobile number	
Email	

Legal qualifications for being a town councillor.

(To qualify you must be able to answer 'Yes' to both of the questions below)

Are you a British citizen, a Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of a European Union country?	Yes/No.
Are you 18 or over?	Yes/No.

(To qualify you must be able to answer 'Yes' to at least one of the questions below)

Are you on the electoral register for the parish of Aldborough and Thurgarton?	Yes/No
Have you lived either in the ward of Aldborough and Thurgarton , or within three miles of its boundary, for at least a year?	Yes/No
Have you been the owner or tenant of land/property in the ward of Aldborough and Thurgarton for at least a year?	Yes/No
Have you had your only or main place of work in ward of Aldborough and Thurgarton for at least a year?	Yes/No.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

(You must be able to answer No to all of the questions below to be eligible to serve as a councillor)

Are you the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order?	Yes/No.
Have you within the last five years been convicted of an offence in the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man which resulted in a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of three months or more without the option of a fine?	Yes/No.

Please tell us something about the life experience you will bring to the Council, for example, previous local government experience, work in the voluntary or charitable sector, business or trade union experience.

Please tell us something about the skills you feel you will bring to the Council, for example, professional qualifications, financial or project management expertise.

Are there any questions you would like to ask the council?

Please note that the majority of Council meetings are held in an evening and, unfortunately, under present legislation the Town Council is not permitted to contribute to the cost of councillors' childcare or care of dependents.

Please type your name below or sign if you are submitting a hard copy and return to clerk@aldboroughandthurgarton-pc.gov.uk

Mrs S Prime
Dunollie House,
Coltishall Rd,
Buxton,
NR10 5HB

If you wish to speak to the Parish Clerk please ring 07789815050

Signed

Date

ALDBOROUGH AND THURGARTON PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH COUNCILLOR – PERSON SPECIFICATION

Aldborough and Thurgarton Parish Council is seeking committed, community-minded individuals who wish to contribute to the wellbeing and future of our villages. The person specification below sets out the skills, knowledge and personal qualities expected of a parish councillor.

COMPETENCY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Personal Attributes	• A genuine interest in Aldborough and Thurgarton and a desire to support the local community. • Fair, honest, reliable and willing to act in the public interest. Open-minded, approachable and respectful of different views. • Willingness to learn about the role and responsibilities of a parish council.	• Existing knowledge of Aldborough & Thurgarton & local community matters. • Can bring a new skill, expertise or insight to the Council.
Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability	• Ability to listen constructively and communicate clearly and courteously. • Ability to work collaboratively with fellow councillors, residents, community groups and external partners. A team player. • Ability to consider information objectively and contribute constructively to discussions and decisions. • Ability to identify local issues and help the Council respond to community needs by seeing projects through from outset to completion. • Ability to maintain confidentiality and act appropriately when handling Council information.	• Experience of working with or being a member of a local authority, public body, charity or community group. • Knowledge of local issues such as planning, highways, the environment, community facilities or heritage. • Basic understanding of finance, budgeting or public accountability. • Experience of working with external agencies, organisations or stakeholders. • Basic IT, administrative or presentation skills.
Time and Other Commitments	• Willingness and ability to attend and participate in Council meetings and occasional additional meetings or events. • Willingness to read meeting papers, consider agenda items and contribute to Council business. • Willingness to support the Council between meetings when required.	• Availability to support working groups, community activities or occasional training.

MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

This Council meets on the first Monday bi-monthly, from and inclusive of January, at Aldborough Community Centre. Councillors may also be asked to attend occasional additional meetings, training sessions or community events.